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INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9585
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1456
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 8893
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7739
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 2510
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TAGS: PTER PGOV PREL KISL KCRM PHUM BG

SUBJECT: ARRESTS OF ALLEGED JMB TERRORISTS CONTINUE

REF: A. DHAKA 80
¶B. DHAKA 44
¶C. DHAKA 41

¶11. (SBU) On January 14-18, the paramilitary Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) mounted new raids leading to the arrest of Jamaatul Mujahidin Bangladesh (JMB) operatives, this time at several locations near Dhaka based both on information developed from previous arrests (reftels) and on new information.

¶12. (C) Highlights follow:

(a) DINAJPUR: Enamul Haque, a suspected JMB group member from Komolpur Bazar in Birol upazila, Dinajpur district, was arrested on 14 January.

(b) NARAYANGANJ: Ayubur Rahman, a purported JMB group commander, was arrested January 17 at Arai Hazar in Narayanganj. Rahman claims to be a student at a Qwami madrasa in Panch Kha in Arai Hazar, and during questioning identified a house in Savar as a base for four other group members.

(c) SAVAR: Based on information from Rahman, a residence in Mazidpur near the Savar bus terminal was raided at 0300 on January 18. The four suspected JMB group members residing there, one of whom was identified by Rahman as Saifullah Rokan, escaped. Officials seized ten improvised iron grenade cases, 11 pieces of Power-gel explosive, sodium sulfide, potassium sulfide, potassium carbonate, chloroform, a measuring scale, Bunsen burners and other implements from the residence. The third-floor residence was rented several months ago by men claiming to be madrasa students. RAB sources report that raids will continue in order to locate and arrest the fugitives.

(d) RANGPUR: Acting on information apparently unconnected to the actions in Dinajpur, Narayanganj and Savar, M. Saifur Rahman was arrested at Lalbagh Rail Crossing point in Rangpur on January 18. Saifur is believed to be a JMB divisional leader for Rangpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, and Nilphamari districts. Saifur claims to be a third year student in Islamic History at Rangpur Carmichael University College, and reportedly recruited new group members from the university.

¶13. (SBU) The Rapid Action Battalion enhanced its already popular profile by spearheading actions against organized criminal activity. On January 18, RAB officers arrested three extortionists who shook down bus passengers in Dhaka. On January 19, RAB orchestrated the arrest of 30 vendors in Dhaka for using weights that were 10%-20% lighter than claimed. These arrests are popular given widespread frustration with the high prices of basic commodities.

Comment

¶4. (S) In his address to the nation last night (septel), Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed reiterated his government's commitment to combat "extremism and terrorism," an apparent reference to the continuing arrests of Jamaatul Mujahidin Bangladesh operatives. So far, the Caretaker Government appears committed to demonstrating that counterterrorism remains a top Bangladeshi government priority. We are continuing to follow these arrests, which are also being reported in other channels. At this time, none of these arrested appears to have been targetting the Embassy or other Western missions.

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